

Appln No. 10/649,874
Amdt date September 12, 2007
Reply to Office action of July 12, 2007

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-18 and 31-43 are pending in the present application, of which claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 13 are independent. New claims 32-43 have been added. No new matter has been introduced. While a number of claims, i.e., claims 32-43, have been added, these claims are directed to some of the subject matter previously included in claims 13-18. For instance, claims 13-18 and 32-43 now together include the subject matter of previous claims 13-18, where claim 13 was a multiple dependent claim depending from claims 1, 2 and 5. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that this amendment be entered.

Applicant acknowledges with thanks the allowance of claims 3, 4 and 8-10 and indication that claims 13-18 include allowable subject matter. Claims 3 and 4 have been amended herein for a minor clerical reason not related to patentability. Applicant respectfully requests further consideration and allowance of claims 1, 2, 5-7, 11 and 12, and further requests allowance of claims 32-43 (as they include a subset of the already allowed subject matter of claims 13-18).

I. Claims Rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1, 2 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being fully anticipated by Ikawa et al. (U.S. Patent App. Publication No. 2006/0101984). Claims 5-7, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Ikawa et al.

Ikawa et al. is not a proper 35 U.S.C. §102(e) or §103(a) reference because it has a PCT filing date of August 8, 2003, while the priority dates of the present application that claims priority of six different Japanese patent applications includes September 17, 2002 and September 19, 2002, both of which predate Ikawa et al. Applicant provides with this response verified translations of the Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-270350 filed on September 17, 2002 and Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-273311 filed on September 19, 2002, both filed with the Japanese Patent Office. Applicant submits that these Japanese patent applications provide sufficient disclosure to be a basis for at least claims 1-12 of the present application.

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Accordingly, Applicant submits that Ikawa et al. is disqualified as a reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Therefore, Applicant requests that the rejection of claims 1, 2, 5-7, 11 and 12 over Ikawa et al. be withdrawn, and that these claims be allowed.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

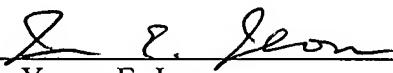
Applicant acknowledges with thanks the allowance of claims 3, 4 and 8-10.

Claims 13-18 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claim 13 now has been rewritten into independent form. As a result of rewriting multiple dependent claim 13 (which depended from claims 1, 2 or 5) into independent form, dependent claim 32 (including the subject matter of claim 2) and dependent claim 38 (including the subject matter of claim 5) were added, and both sets of new dependent claims 33-37 (depending from claim 32) and 39-43 (depending from claim 38) correspond to claims 14-18, such that no additional claim requiring further consideration or search has been added.

III. Concluding Remarks

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant earnestly solicits an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance with claims 1-18 and 32-43. If there are any remaining issues that can be resolved over the telephone, the Examiner is cordially invited to call Applicant's attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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APPENDIX A